

**WE CLAIM:**

- 1           1. A method of offering items for sale in a group, comprising:
  - 2           (1) defining an affinity space coordinate for each of plural items available
  - 3           for sale;
  - 4           (2) creating a package template including at least one mandatory element
  - 5           schema having an associated affinity space description;
  - 6           (3) comparing, with a computer, the affinity space coordinate for each of the
  - 7           plural items with the affinity space description associated with the package
  - 8           template; and
  - 9           (4) if the comparison step reveals a match, presenting for sale a package that
  - 10          is defined at least in part by the package template and includes at least one item
  - 11          with a matching affinity space description.
- 1           2. The method of claim 1 wherein the presenting step is performed by
- 2           dynamically generating an html page containing a description of the package, and
- 3           transmitting the html page over a decentralized computer network to at least one
- 4           consumer.
- 1           3. The method of claim 1 further including eliciting at least one constraint
- 2           from a consumer, and selecting or rejecting the package template based at least in
- 3           part on the elicited consumer constraint.
- 1           4. The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes customer
- 2           mood.
- 1           5. The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes number of
- 2           persons travelling.
- 1           6. The method of claim 3 wherein the elicited constraint includes a timing
- 2           constraint.

1 7. The method of claim 1 further including storing a description of each of  
2 the plural items, including said associated affinity space coordinates in a computer  
3 database, and wherein the comparing step includes searching the computer  
4 database for items having affinity coordinates matching the affinity space  
5 description associated with the package template.

1 8. The method of claim 1 further including maintaining a hash table of the  
2 items keyed by affinity space coordinate, and wherein the comparing step includes  
3 performing a hash table lookup for each required affinity space description.

1 9. The method of claim 1 further including permitting a consumer to  
2 purchase the package by transmitting at least one message over a digital  
3 communications network.

1 10. The method of claim 9 further including confirming the consumer's  
2 purchase of the package by transmitting a further message of the digital  
3 communications network.

1 11. A computer system for offering items for sale in a group, comprising:  
2 a data arrangement that stores at least a description of each of plural items  
3 available for sale, said description including an affinity space coordinate, the data  
4 arrangement also storing at least one package template including at least one  
5 mandatory element schema having an associated affinity space description;  
6 a comparator coupled to the data arrangement, the comparator comparing the  
7 affinity space coordinate for each of the plural items with the affinity space  
8 description associated with the package template; and  
9 a user interface arrangement coupled to the comparator, the user interface  
10 presenting for sale a package that is defined at least in part by the package template  
11 and includes at least one item with a matching affinity space description.

1 *put in* 12. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface arrangement includes a  
2 page generator that dynamically generating an html page containing a description  
3 of the package, and transmits the html page over a decentralized computer network  
4 to at least one consumer web browsing appliance.

1 13. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface arrangement also  
2 elicits at least one constraint from a consumer, and selects or rejects the package  
3 template based at least in part on the elicited consumer constraint.

1 14. The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes  
2 customer mood.

1 15. The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes number  
2 of persons travelling.

1 16. The system of claim 13 wherein the elicited constraint includes a timing  
2 constraint.

1 *put in* 17. The system of claim 1 wherein the comparator includes a database  
2 engine that searches the computer database for items having affinity coordinates  
3 matching the affinity space description associated with the package template.

1 18. The system of claim 1 further including a hash table of the plural items  
2 keyed by affinity space coordinate, and wherein the comparator performs a hash  
3 table lookup for each required affinity space description.

1 19. The system of claim 1 further including a purchase transactor that  
2 permits a consumer to purchase the package by transmitting at least one message  
3 over a digital communications network.

1 20. The system of claim 19 further including a confirmation section that  
2 confirms the consumer's purchase of the package by transmitting a further message  
3 of the digital communications network.

1           21. A method of offering travel arrangements over a decentralized computer  
2 network to a consumer using a web browsing appliance, the method comprising:

- 3           (a) storing descriptions of available travel components in a database;  
4           (b) storing at least one travel package template;  
5           (c) eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer;  
6           (d) dynamically generating at least one travel package based on the elicited  
7 consumer constraint, at least one travel package template, and at least one stored  
8 available travel component description; and  
9           (e) offering the generated travel package to the consumer by transmitting a  
10 description of the generated travel package over the decentralized computer  
11 network to the consumer's web browsing appliance.

1           22. The method of claim 21 further including receiving a consumer  
2 purchase request over the network, and performing a purchasing transaction to  
3 purchase the at least one stored available travel component.

1           23. The method of claim 21 further including using a screen-scraping  
2 technique to obtain said available travel component descriptions.

1           24. The method of claim 21 wherein the travel component description  
2 includes an affinity space coordinate.

1           25. The method of claim 21 wherein the travel package template includes at  
2 least one mandatory element schema having an associated affinity space  
3 description.

1           26. The method of claim 21 wherein the generating step includes  
2 comparing, with a computer, a affinity space coordinate for each of the travel  
3 components with a affinity space description associated with the package  
4 template.

1 27. The method of claim 21 wherein the available travel components each  
2 expire within a short time period.

1 28. A computer system for offering travel arrangements over a decentralized  
2 computer network to a consumer using a web browsing appliance, comprising:  
3 a data storage arrangement that stores descriptions of available travel  
4 components and at least one travel package template;  
5 a user interface element coupled to the network, the user interface element  
6 eliciting at least one constraint from a consumer; and  
7 an package engine that dynamically generates at least one travel package  
8 based on the elicited consumer constraint, at least one travel package template, and  
9 at least one stored available travel component description, and offers the generated  
10 travel package to the consumer by transmitting a description of the generated travel  
11 package over the decentralized computer network to the consumer's web browsing  
12 appliance.

1 29. A method of dynamically creating packages comprising:  
2 (a) receiving a request based on a link from a web site;  
3 (b) ascertaining at least one customer constraint;  
4 (c) dynamically generating at least one package based on the elicited  
5 consumer constraint, at least one package template, and at least one stored  
6 available component description, and  
7 (d) offering the generated package to the consumer by transmitting a  
8 description of the generated package over a decentralized computer network.

1 30. The method of claim 29 wherein the component comprises a last-minute  
2 travel component, and the web site offers at least travel related services.

1 31. The method of claim 29 wherein the dynamically generating step is  
2 performed by the web site.